

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 00775 110837Z

15

ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 MMS-03 IO-14 NEA-11 AF-10

CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 OMB-01

DRC-01 /155 W

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R 080822Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2502

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, UK, IO, AS

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN REACTIONS TO EXTENSIONS AT DIEGO GARCIA

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AUSTRALIAN OFFICIAL AND PRESS REACTION TO ANNOUNCEMENT ON EXTENSIONS AT DIEGO GARCIA HAS BEEN MIXED. FOREIGN MINISTER AUTHORIZED PRESS STATEMENT FEB 7 WHICH EXPRESSES MILD CONCERN OVER NEGATIVE IMPACT EXTENSIONS MAY HAVE ON INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE, THOUGH IT NOTES EXTENSIONS ARE MINOR. PRESS TREATMENT GENERALLY FACTUAL. DFA NOTES PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM MAY COMMENT FURTHER ON EXTENSIONS IN SINGAPORE, WHERE HE IS CURRENTLY VISITING. END SUMMARY.

2. AUSTRALIAN DEPT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS INFORMS US THAT MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILLESEE APPROVED TEXT OF FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO BE MADE TO PRESS FEB 7. VERSION OF STATEMENT APPEARED IN SEVERAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 CANBER 00775 110837Z

PAPERS, THOUGH NOT COMPLETE TEXT, WHICH AS FOLLOWS:

QTE: WE HAVE BEEN AWARE OF THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE US AND THE UK AND HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY BOTH OF THE AGREEMENT THEY HAVE REACHED. THERE ARE NO IMPLICATIONS FOR THE USE OF AUSTRALIAN FORCES IN THE MEASURES PROPOSED BY THOSE TWO COUNTRIES.

UNFORTUNATELY THE INDIAN OCEAN IS AN AREA NOT FREE FROM GREAT POWER RIVALRY. IT IS OUR FIRM HOPE AND BELIEF THAT AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED MEASURES TO BE TAKEN THE LEVEL OF DEPLOYMENTS BY THE GREAT POWERS WILL NOT FURTHER ESCALATE. AT THE SAME TIME AUSTRALIA IS A MEMBER OF AND HAS GIVEN ITS FIRM SUPPORT TO THE UN AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE, AND HAS ENDORSED THE ASEAN PROPOSAL FOR A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY IN THE ASEAN REGION. BOTH THESE PROPOSALS LOOK TO A SITUATION WHERE GREAT POWER RIVALRY WILL BE ELIMINATED FROM AN AREA OF IMPORTANCE TO AUSTRALIA WITH, IN THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW, CONSEQUENTIAL BENEFITS TO THE REGION. WHILE AS WE UNDERSTAND IT THE MEASURES PROPOSED FOR MAKING DIEGO GARCIA A SUPPORT FACILITY ARE NOT ELABORATE, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE BUILDING UP OF FACILITIES BY ANY GREAT POWER IN THE INDIAN OCEAN OR THE INTRODUCTION OF ADDITIONAL NAVAL FORCES DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LONG TERM OBJECTIVES WHICH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENTS OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION HAVE SET FOR THEMSELVES." END QTE.

3. AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER TREATMENT WAS MIXED. CANBERRA TIMES ARTICLE NOTED AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SHARES INDIAN APPREHENSIONS ON EXTENSIONS. AGE STATES AUSTRALIA HAD INDICATED IT WAS OPPOSED TO EXTENSION AS MOVE DID NOT CONTRIBUTE TO AUSTRALIA'S LONG TERM OBJECTIVES FOR REGION. NOTES NO IMPLICATION THAT DIEGO GARCIA WILL BE USED BY AUSTRALIAN FORCES. ARTICLE NOTES ACTUAL IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE MINOR, BUT GOA IS CAREFULLY ASSESSING U.S. MOTIVES AND POSSIBLE SOVIET REACTION AS WELL AS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE. SYDNEY MORNING HERALD CARRIES FACTUAL STORY ON FACILITY, NOTING ITS AUSTERE CHARACTER. FINANCIAL REVIEW CARRIES PARTIAL TEXT OF DFA STATEMENT.

4. COMMENT: DFA POINTED OUT TO EMBASSY THAT PRESS STATEMENT MADE FEB 7 MAY BE FURTHER AMPLIFIED BY COMMENTS PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM MAY MAKE IN SINGAPORE FEB 8 AND 9. ACCORDING SENIOR DFA SOURCES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CANBER 00775 110837Z

NO ONE IN CANBERRA KNOWS WHAT WHITLAM MAY SAY. WE CAN ONLY HOPE ANY COMMENT WILL BE BALANCED. IT WOULD BE VERY USEFUL HERE IF MORE INFORMATION WERE AVAILABLE PUBLICLY RE SOVIET ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES IN INDIAN OCEAN.
HARROP

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